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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended for use in conducting a three-session course that will help employees in the manufacturing and service industries acquire necessary stress management skills. The instructional materials presented are designed to help students learn to accomplish the following: recognize good and bad stress and understand the physical, emotional/psychological and physiological aspects of stress; learn about different relaxation techniques; and develop a plan to reduce personal stress through exercise, good nutrition, and better time use. Included in the guide are course outline and sections of materials for use in conducting each of the course's three sessions. Each session contains some or all of the following: objectives, topical outline, suggested teaching and evaluation methods, teacher tips, lesson outline, student handouts, and self-assessment instruments. (MN)

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Stress Management

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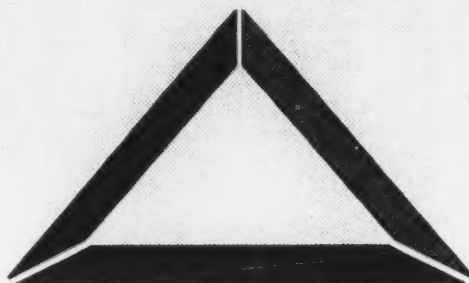
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Stress Management



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1994

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STRESS MANAGEMENT

COURSE OUTLINE

◆ *It's a simple fact: People who accept and adapt to change experience less stress.* ◆

Session I

1. Learning to recognize good and bad stress in yourself
 - a) physical, emotional/psychological and physiological aspects
2. Learn about relaxation techniques
3. Make a plan of action and DO IT

Session II

1. Review relaxation techniques and how used during the week
Emphasize "practice" needed
2. Communication habits that can increase stress
3. Learning communication techniques that can help break down your stress
4. Practice techniques in role play
 - a) plan action – DO IT

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STRESS MANAGEMENT ♦ SESSION 1

OBJECTIVES

- Learn to recognize good and bad stress
- Understand the physical, emotional/psychological and physiological aspects
- Learn variety of relaxation techniques
- Utilize techniques to reduce stress at work or in personal life

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- Define stress and stress symptoms
- Deep breathing
- Muscle relaxation
- Imagery and visualization
- Positive thinking

METHODS

- Discussion and hand outs
- Working in small groups
- Role-plays
- Completing worksheets

EVALUATION

- Verbal participation
- Completing worksheets
- Coaching/helping one another in skill development

TEACHER TIPS ♦ *SESSION 1*

- I. Ice breaker
- II. Registration forms
- III. About stress...
 - A. Share information and discuss: What it is; we each respond differently. Stress has been part of human existence since the cave man. It is a fact of life.
 - Encourage questions and examples.
 - FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS
 - B. Physical stress response; Physiological stress response; Emotional/psychological stress response.
 - Fight or flight response. Our own thinking process can contribute to stress. Explain and encourage questions and examples from the participants.
 - FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS
 - C. What can one do?
 - Recognize what you and your body do. Generate discussion by encouraging participants to consider their own stress patterns on the job. Draw out examples.
 - Learn about deep breathing, relaxation and visualizing techniques to interrupt the stress cycle.
 - Teach deep breathing and do bubble exercise. Emphasize increase in oxygen to the brain; feel better; functioning improves. Using class discussion and examples of their particular job stresses have participants imagine using the techniques learned. In small groups have participants discuss job stress as they experience it and their attempts to handle it. Through open ended questions have participants evaluate what has worked for them and what hasn't.

~TEACHER TIPS ♦ SESSION 1

D. Stress level personal inventory – HAND-OUT

- Complete individually and discuss. Draw out discussion of personal and on-the-job stress.
- This is a tool to assist participants in recognizing their own stress patterns and then to consider making improvements in their management of job stress.

E. Summary - You CAN make the changes within your control. Just DO IT. Keep practicing.

- Reinforce the importance USING what you learn.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Stress has been part of the daily lives of humans since they first walked the earth. Whether it's triggered by an attacking tiger in the prehistoric jungle or work/home issues, it is a **fact of life**.

The stress we experience today is more intense and unrelenting than that experienced by our primitive ancestors. If confronted by a tiger, primitive man responded with the "**fight or flight**" reaction. That is, through chemical changes (an *adrenaline surge*) his body became physiologically prepared for either of two options: **flee or attack**. His choices were clear: either he was eaten or he survived and his body quickly returned to normal.

Today, the stress we experience is less obvious and more pervasive. We are subjected to it at home and in the office. For many, stress is not an ally but the cause of deteriorating health, lack of productivity and depression.

While our bodies still react biochemically as if the situation is instantly resolvable by fleeing or fighting, **the stressors we experience are often complex emotional threats where alternatives for mental "survival" are not obvious.**

NO-NO'S

◆**OUR THOUGHTS** can contribute to increasing or maintaining stressful feelings!!!!!!◆

We **distort** information which we **tell ourselves** (in our thinking) and add to our stress.

Here are some ways we increase our stress response:

1. All or nothing thinking: A situation is either good or bad, right or wrong; a middle position is not considered.
2. Perfectionistic thinking: Anything less than perfect is unacceptable.
3. Over generalization: Broad conclusions drawn from little evidence.
4. CATASTROPHIZING Catatrophizing: Interpreting events and bodily sensations as much worse than the available information merits.
5. Self-punishing thinking: Excessive blaming of self when events do not happen as the person wishes.

******* IF WE DON'T CHANGE OUR THINKING, WE CAN'T CHANGE OUR BEHAVIOR.**

LEARN TO MONITOR YOUR OWN PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO STRESS

Here are a variety of techniques designed to INHIBIT the stress response:

1. Deep breathing (diaphragmatic breathing)
2. Muscle relaxation
3. Imagery and visualization exercises
4. Biofeedback training – instruments which measure muscle activity, electrical skin conductance, etc.

..... see a professional

AND/OR

learn to be more aware of your own internal bodily activity,
i.e.(1)changes in hand and finger temperature, (2) muscle tension, (3)
heart rate.

3 STRESS OPTIONS

Think about **whether the stressors are under your control** or not. Then decide:

1. CHANGE THE SITUATION
2. and/or CHANGE YOUR RESPONSE to the situation
3. and/or RELAX, LET GO and TAKE CARE of YOURSELF.

THE 24 HOUR RULE

If something is causing you to be angry/frustrated and building stress, **GET IT OUT** within 24 hours or **LET IT GO!!!!**

RELAXATION

DEEP BREATHING:

- It is a form of relaxation
- Here's how:
 1. Sit in a comfortable position, arms at your sides, shoulders relaxed
 2. **Inhale** slowly through your **nose**, making abdomen rise. Your chest, rib cage and shoulders should not move at all. Only the abdomen swells as the lower lungs fill with air.
 3. **Exhale** slowly and completely through your **mouth**, with the chest and abdominal area collapsing and falling inward.
 4. In this type of breathing your stomach goes out to inhale and is sucked **in to exhale**.
 5. Practice about 10 cycles.
 6. Practice deep abdominal breathing as you sit, stand and walk - on the job or anywhere!

HAVING A HOBBY AS A STRESS RELIEVER:

- Hobbies require focused attention, thus taking your mind off your worries
- Give you personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment
- They are entirely under your control and the more control you have, the less stress you feel!

STRESS MANAGEMENT ♦ SESSION 2

OBJECTIVES

- Learn about good communication skills
- Communicate to reduce or minimize stress
- Utilize these techniques at work and at home

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- Communication - It's how you say it.
- Active listening
- "I" messages
- Personality differences

METHODS

- Discussion and hand outs
- Working in small groups
- Role plays
- Completing worksheets

EVALUATION

- Verbal participation
- Completing worksheets
- Coaching/helping one another in skill development

~TEACHER TIPS ♦ SESSION 2

- I. Review deep breathing, etc.; answer questions; discuss opportunities to use techniques during the last week.

- II. Communicating clearly to reduce stress/stressful situations
- FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

Using the hand-outs as aids, highlight and discuss the following with examples to clarify:

- A. Recognize the causes of stress on the job – have participants contribute their thoughts on their job stress

- B. Combat job stress – suggestions

- C. Active listening

- Roleplay and discuss:
Develop roleplay from participant suggestions for probable job stress situations and then act out for job application; refer to flip charts to concretize learning

- D. "I" messages

- Roleplay and discuss:
Develop roleplay from participant suggestions for probable job stress situations and then act out for job application; refer to flip charts to concretize learning

- E. Personality differences – ask open ended questions to expand participant awareness to recognize and accept differences in each other, thereby keeping a handle on stress

- III. Summary

VISUALIZE YOUR WAY TO RELAXATION

Mental imagery is another effective method of reducing stress. A little like a daydream, mental imagery uses both sight and sound to help you relax.

- Get comfortable
- Close your eyes. Do your "deep breathing"
- Visualize a peaceful, relaxing scene. Try one of the following images or make up one of your own:
 - A. Picture yourself walking on a deserted beach. Hear the gentle hiss of the waves coming ashore. Feel the soft sand under your feet. Let the warmth of the sun untie the knots of tension all over your body.
 - B. Place yourself on a mountain top with a tropical garden just below. See the glistening dew on the surrounding trees. Listen for the sound of a waterfall in the distance.
 - C. Envision a cloud floating down, enveloping you and supporting you completely as you float away. Feel the air as it flows over your body. Listen to the calming winds

COMMUNICATION AS PART OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

☒ Stress is often caused, remains unresolved or worsened by:

- An inability to communicate effectively with yourself
- An inability to communicate effectively with others

☒ You communicate poorly with yourself when you:

- lack objectivity
- respond to "old tapes" which may produce unhealthy behavior, but may have helped you cope in the past
- blame others for causing your stress
- believing you are a helpless victim
- focus on life's unfairness

☒ You can communicate honestly and productively with yourself if you:

- are objective in evaluating the situation and understand how your own feelings may be adding to your stress
- acknowledge how you contributed to the stressful situation or problem. Learn from the experience by changing your behavior.
- believe in your ability to combat stress. **MANAGE** the stress, don't be helpless. Believing in your ability to combat stress helps you maintain your self-confidence and avoids prolonged anxiety and depression.

☒ You can't effectively manage a stressful situation unless you can communicate well. Some **common** communication **pitfalls** are:

- Taking stress out on others
- Focusing on the symptoms, not the problem
- Being reluctant to ask for support

COMMUNICATION AS PART OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

⌘ **Three elements of effective communication are:**

- Tell people how you feel.
- Try to identify the real issue.
- Communicate in a constructive, non-confrontational fashion by:
 1. avoiding making accusations
 2. get feedback from the other party
 3. focus on **solutions** - not the problem

☒ If you and another person experience a conflict that produces stress, avoid getting into a direct confrontation. Try:

- listening while the other party vents his or her anger
- keep your own stress in check
- give feedback - indicate that you understood what the person said
- restate the fundamental issues
- encourage a dialogue
- keep the conversation aimed at solutions

STRESS: HOW VULNERABLE ARE YOU?

Here is a "test" to help you make a quick assessment of your habits in regard to stress management. Find out if you have some bad habits that make your stress worse. Then consider what action YOU need to take if you are not pleased with your "test" results.

Score each item from 1 (almost always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time each statement applies to you.

- _____ 1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.
- _____ 2. I get seven to eight hours sleep at least four nights a week.
- _____ 3. I give and receive affection regularly.
- _____ 4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.
- _____ 5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.
- _____ 6. I smoke less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.
- _____ 7. I take fewer than five alcoholic drinks a week.
- _____ 8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.
- _____ 9. I have an income adequate to meet my expenses.
- _____ 10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.
- _____ 11. I regularly attend club or social activities.
- _____ 12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
- _____ 13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.
- _____ 14. I am in good health.
- _____ 15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.
- _____ 16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about
- _____ 17. I do something for fun at least once a week.
- _____ 18. I am able to organize my time effectively.
- _____ 19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or tea or cola drinks) during the day.
- _____ 20. I take quiet time for myself during the day.

_____ TOTAL

To get your score, ADD up the figures and SUBTRACT 20. Any number over 30 indicates a vulnerability to stress. You are **seriously vulnerable** if your score is **between 50 and 75**, and **extremely vulnerable** if it is over 75.

This test was developed by Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith of the Boston University Medical Center

ACTIVE LISTENING

Listening seems like an easy skill, but it really requires hard work.

Do you ever have trouble listening to messages from other people? What are your listening habits? Read each statement below. Circle "YES" if it is true for you most of the time. Circle "NO" if it is not true for you most of the time.

1. I wait and allow the other person to finish what he or she is saying before I speak. YES NO
2. I pay attention even when I don't like the speaker. YES NO
3. I easily ignore distractions when I am listening. YES NO
4. I can easily remember what other people say to me. YES NO
5. I ask the speaker questions when I don't understand something. YES NO
6. I look at people when they are talking to me. YES NO

Your YES statements show that you already have some active listening habits. This shows that you are involved in the communication process and that you take responsibility for understanding the speaker's message.

Think about your NO statements. What steps could you take to change those listening habits?

Here's a tip: To check your understanding of a message, repeat the speaker's main points in your own words.

DID YOU KNOW...

1. At least **75% of workers** say that they experience **stress at work**.
 - Stress-related problems: illness, reduced productivity, etc., cost businesses many \$\$\$\$ each year.
2. Most stress experienced by workers arises from one or more of the following:
 - a sense of lack of control
 - feeling a lack of recognition
 - uncertainty about the future
 - boredom

⌘ HERE ARE 5 STEPS EMPLOYEES CAN TAKE TO COMBAT JOB STRESS:

1. Don't react -- ACT! Identify the underlying issue
2. Take control. Develop a strategy for addressing the issue.
3. Learn effective communication skills.
4. Create a means for combating boredom.
5. Know what you like about your job. Focus on enhancing those aspects.

STRESS REDUCING COMMUNICATION

"I" statements

- take responsibility for yourself, your feelings

How is it done?

- Focus on **YOUR FEELINGS** in reaction to someone's **BEHAVIOR**

"I feel state feeling.....**when you do.....**describe behavior....."

- Stick with the issue at hand, NOT what happened yesterday, last week, last month, etc.

No blaming or attacking - that's like throwing gasoline on a flame. What's the result? Tempers will probably get out of control, no productive discussion of the immediate problem can occur, bad feelings grow and resentment builds until the next "problem" and then reactions will be out of proportion from stored up anger.

Follow "I" statement with:

- ☒ " Can we talk about this?"
(not hostile/aggressive but an invitation)

OR

- ☒ "Let's talk about this so it doesn't become a problem, when are you willing to talk?"

STRESS MANAGEMENT ♦ SESSION 3

OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness of personal stressors
- Reduce stress through exercise
- Reduce stress through good nutrition
- Reduce stress through better time use

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- Physical and mental benefits of exercise
- Stress "combating" foods
- Foods/drinks that make stress symptoms worse
- Time management skills

METHODS

- Discussion and hand outs
- Working in small groups
- Role plays
- Completing worksheets

EVALUATION

- Verbal participation
- Completing worksheets
- Coaching/helping one another in skill development

TEACHER TIPS ♦ *SESSION 3*

- I. Review and/or answer questions from previous sessions. Discuss opportunities to use learned techniques during the last week.
 - A. Measure stress level – HAND-OUT – group discussion centering on life stresses and how these may be affecting your work; also used as another self awareness tool – i.e. you can manage and handle stress if you are aware of it and how it is affecting you

- II. Reducing stress through proper nutrition – present information on the following and draw out participants in discussion:
 - A. Stress combating foods
 - B. Stress irritating foods
 - FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

- III. Reducing stress through exercise – present information on the following and draw out participants in discussion:
 - A. Physical and mental benefits
 - B. Making/taking the time
 - FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

- IV. Reducing stress through planning/using time better
 - A. Make a list
 - B. Accomplishing tasks – emphasize making it manageable by breaking into sub steps
 - C. Think about priorities
 - FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUT
 - D. Break-out groups (3) – Direct participants to discuss variety of stress management techniques during the course for personal preference and comfort levels, and then to develop action plans to personally incorporate changes resulting in better stress management

~TEACHER TIPS ♦ SESSION 3

- V. Changes. Slow process; ups and downs; believe in self; plan action and DO IT. Keep practicing.

- FLIP CHART AND HAND-OUTS

“Think about a work situation causing you stress. Think about what is in your control; plan your course of action, remembering to use your stress management techniques.” DISCUSS in break-out groups (3).

- VI. Personal response to stress – stress scales

A. HAND-OUT. Complete and discuss.

- VII. Course evaluation

HOLMES AND RAHE'S "SOCIAL READJUSTMENT RATING SCALE"

**LOOK AT THE POSSIBLE STRESS OVER THE COURSE OF THE
YEAR:**

<u>Value</u>	<u>Life event</u>
100	Death of spouse
73	Divorce
65	Marital separation
63	Jail term
63	Death of close family member
53	Personal injury or loss
50	Marriage
47	Fired at work
45	Marital reconciliation
45	Retirement
44	Change in health of family member
40	Pregnancy
39	Sex difficulties
39	Gain of new family member
39	Business readjustment
38	Change in financial state
37	Death of a close friend
36	Change to a different line of work
35	Change in the number of arguments with spouse
31	Mortgage over \$100,000
30	Foreclosure of mortgage or loan
29	Change in responsibilities at work
29	Son or daughter leaving home
29	Trouble with in-laws
28	Outstanding personal achievement
26	Spouse begins or stops work
26	Begin or end school
25	Change in living conditions
24	Revision of personal habits
23	Trouble with boss
20	Change in work hours or conditions

HOLMES AND RAHE'S "SOCIAL READJUSTMENT RATING SCALE"

**LOOK AT THE POSSIBLE STRESS OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR
(Continued):**

<u>Value</u>	<u>Life event</u>
20	Change in residence
20	Change in schools
19	Change in recreation
19	Change in church activities
19	Change in social activities
15	Mortgage or loan of less than \$100,000
15	Change in sleeping habits
15	Change in eating habits

Originally a "300" point score was considered as a "danger level" above which the individual has a 90% chance of a major health problem as a result of stress and change. Today, stress experts recognize that individual differences plus learned strategies of stress management can alter stress and change tolerances.

STRESS

Nutrition: You are what you eat?

When you eat poorly you make it hard for your body to withstand the chemical demands of stress. You also put yourself at risk for illnesses such as heart disease and high blood pressure. [**Junk food, salty, full of sugar, empty calories**]

When you under stress, your body uses up important vitamins and minerals faster. You will run down mentally and physically. Your immune system is affected and you become more likely to become ill.

- INCREASE VITAMIN C to combat short term stress
- PROTEIN, CALCIUM AND POTASSIUM to combat ongoing, pervasive stress in addition to increasing Vitamin C

Stress-Irritating Foods

- Foods high in fat -- hard to digest
- Depressants and stimulants -- alcohol and caffeine

STRESS



Stress Reactions:

When you are coping with stress, do you change your behavior in any of the following ways?

- Depend too much on others/ relationships _____
- Make unrealistic demands to get the attention and companionship of others _____
- Isolate yourself from family, friends, co-workers _____
- Avoid dealing with stressful situations by involving yourself in non-threatening situations (work, children, etc.) _____
- Become helpless by deferring to others or delay decision-making _____
- Have a sense of purposelessness. Can't get organized _____
- Assume a weak, helpless role of victim _____
- Blame someone else for the problem _____
- Avoid acknowledging stress by becoming hyperactive, over organized _____
- Focus on others' problems, not your own _____
- Quick to provide the "right" answer, offer expert advice _____

STRESS AND EXERCISE

Exercise increases your energy level:

- The more oxygen you breathe in from the air, the more energy and stamina you will have
- Regular exercise increases your body's ability to draw more oxygen out of the air you breathe
- Exercise makes your muscles more flexible - you won't tire as easily
- If you don't want to go to the gym and pay fees to get your exercise:

WALK:

1. Walking lowers the blood pressure
 2. Walking controls stress by increasing the relaxation hormones in the brain
 3. Walking promotes weight loss and weight control by burning calories
- Make the time in your schedule. Your health and the stress reducing benefits are important.

STRESS AND MANAGING YOUR TIME

◆THE MAJOR CAUSES OF GOING CRAZY OVER DEADLINES ARE PROCRASTINATION AND PERFECTIONISM.◆

- Decide what you need to do -- plan the steps to be taken
- Do the important things first
- Trying to be perfect wastes time and you will never be perfect
- Set goals and priorities
- Make a "to do" list
- If the situation is in your control – take action instead of fretting about it
- Time management strategies aim to make your life easier and more flexible – not to cram in as much as you can